

## Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, July 11, 1895, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. 10, rue Nitot, Paris. July 11, 1895. My dear Alec:

You have been lovely in writing me so often such nice long letters. Call them "journal notes" or letters whatever you please, if they only had a beginning and end I would be quite satisfied to call them very nice letters. Of course there is much I would like to know of the place and your surroundings which you leave out, still I am much interested in your experiments and in your reading. As it happens I have about starved myself mentally since coming here as if I had English books around I feared the children would read them. I might have been tempted beyond my strength if I went into a bookstore, but we live so far from them and it is so hard for me to do any shopping here alone, that I never see the inside of a bookstore. The consequence is your bits of reading matter are doubly delightful.

It was good getting a properly begun and ended letter from you today, our wedding day. I hoped a cable might have come too and perhaps it will tomorrow. I want it to tell me where in the wide expanse of these United States of ours you are. And I want to know that your Flint exertions on top of your hard work at Beinn Bhreagh has not quite killed you. What an exciting time they had on the launch to be sure. I hope she is not much injured. And I want to know about Flint. I am so glad that you received those navy officers and dined them. But I wish you went over the mountain with them too. It would have done 2 you a great deal of good. What a shame the fresh water experiments failed while the navy officers were there.

Coming home from Barbison and Moret last night I found yet another letter from you. I do so like hearing from you.

## Library of Congress

I wanted to write you yesterday but we were travelling all day. We started at a moment's notice, tore across Paris at the greatest speed the driver, anxious for double fare, could get out of his horse and got to the station with about three minutes to spare. Not as exciting a chase as yours, but we had a breakdown, a very small one, but Elsie had to hold on to something to keep it from blocking the wheels. Mrs. Mauro's sister, Miss Rockwood, went with us and we did Barbizon, finding nothing however but green fields from which the blue and red glory had been swept, distant forests and rather picturesque peasant houses. But to me the country without water seems dry and uninteresting and I was rather glad that our French family turned out unsatisfactory and thus settled the question of our going there.

From Barbizon we went to Moret and the difference to me was like going from the dry desert to a green oasis with water. Moret is a little fortress town left over from ancient times, with wells and gate towers still standing, the latter arched over the highway. Outside flows rapidly a pretty little river with rushes lining its banks and old houses overhanging it, the dearest little river you ever saw with many a twist and turn with nothing special to do but look pretty and afford a big wash tub for the washerwomen. Well we rattled through the streets and stopped before a little white-washed house. A neat 3 maid in cap showed us into one of the most delicious summer rooms I ever saw, the very pattern and essence of what a summer room should be. Why couldn't I get those painters of mine to hit on that delicious cool green for one of my rooms. I had the idea of it but could not teach it to those painters. Bare the room was, as should be every room where one's chief object is to get as much air everywhere, around and under, as possible. Here was a divan, there a couple of basket chairs, a piano, a table and sideboard, on the wall a few artistic plates, on middle of the floor a cool square of matting and elsewhere but the pretty cool red tiles. A golden-haired child sat by a tall, fine looking woman in white and both had their hands full of dainty colored silks and everything was as artistic and refreshing as could be after the stuffed air and violently bad wall paper of all the rooms we had seen elsewhere. The lady is an American and all her pupils are Americans except one titled English girl. She

## Library of Congress

led us out into her pretty quaint garden, with roses in bloom and hollyhocks along the path to a little square where a tea table was spread with dainty china and a girl and a governess lounged under the shade of the trees and close by the river that here was at it's very prettiest. Across the river the grass grows, due to the water level and the trees, but here the river is walled in and you go down a few steps to the boat that lies moored by the garden wall. Miss Heas rowed us up the river and a prettier and quieter and more romantic I never saw. Just such a river as you read about when lovers linger among the rushes or under the overhanging trees, shut in by the bend of the river from all prying eyes and yet close by people. A ruined tower, strong, square 4 and massive, ivy-covered, guards this part of the river and further off raising beyond the tree-tops is the tower of the quaint old church. We took tea with the six girls under the trees by the water side and then came home and I have decided to send the children there for a month. I think I am doing the best for them and that they will really do better with Miss Hess than in any French family because her's is a school where everything is arranged for the special object of teaching the best French in the shortest possible time. I have not felt satisfied with the children's progress lately, they have been too much with me and too anxious to do sightseeing. The nuns I think are good teachers and if I could put my children entirely under their charge for a year or two I think they would do well. But they have not the same incentive to hurry on Elsie that Miss Hesa would have. Elsie will have the French governess share her room so as to talk to her all the time and Daisy one of the older girls who speak French perfectly. Mrs. Mauro says these girls speak without the slightest accent. In the first place I cannot find a family with whom I would be satisfied to leave Elsie and Daisy and secondly I do not believe they would give Elsie the attention in speaking she needs. They could not unless they had a regular school. I might put the children in the convent dormitory now but I think they both need country air. As for me I am going to stay with Mrs. Mauro or Aileen until you come. I have heard of a little French maid who is very highly recommended and I may take her and board at Moret with Charles in attendance. I think too I may go to St. Michaels Mt. with Miss Duncan for a few days. 5 I have always wanted to go there and

## Library of Congress

think I will treat myself to that holiday. Then I feel that you will be coming soon and I am ready for anything with that hope.

I hope you found Mr. McCurdy conducted the experiments satisfactory so that you will leave with a happier mind.

Ever lovingly, Mabel.